

S E R M O N

UNIVERSITY

C A M B R I D G E

Dr. *KERRICH's*

COMMENCEMENT

S E R M O N.

SAMUEL KERRICH, D.D.

Woolverton, Norfolk.

Fellow of Corpus Christi College.

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Dr. KERRICH'S

COMMENT

SE R M O N.

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A  
SERMON

PREACHED before the

UNIVERSITY

OF

CAMBRIDGE,

ON

COMMENCEMENT SUNDAY,

In the Morning, JUNE 29. 1735.

Being One of the Days appointed for the

COMMEMORATION

OF THE

FOUNDERS

AND

BENEFACTORS.

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By *SAMUEL KERRICH*, D.D.

Rector of *WOOLFERTON* in *NORFOLK*,  
and late Fellow of *Corpus Christi College*.

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Printed for *W. THURLBOURN*, against the *Senate-House* in  
*Cambridge*; and Sold by *J. ROBERTS* in *Warwick-Lane*,  
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1 P E T. iv. 10.

*As every Man hath received the Gift,  
even so minister the same one to ano-  
ther, as good Stewards of the manifold  
Grace of God.*

**A**S it has pleased the God of  
Wisdom to temper the Excel-  
lencies and Defects of Man-  
kind together in such Propor-  
tion, that they stand in need of the mu-  
tual Assistance of each other, for the  
Comforts, Conveniencies, and even Ne-  
cessaries of Life : It is most undoubtedly  
HIS Will, that the Different Powers,  
Abilities and Opportunities, which are  
put into their Hands, should be So em-  
ployed. This the *Apostle* in my Text  
has

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has set in a very strong Light, — \* *As every Man, says he, hath Received the Gift, even so Minister the same one to another, as Good Stewards of the Manifold Grace of God.*

In which Words the following Particulars are evidently contained, or implied ; Proper for Our Meditation at this time ;

That the *Grace of God is Manifold* : that he has dispensed his Favours to us in different Kinds, and Measures, and Degrees.

\* It may be thought perhaps that the *Apostle* had here a View ONLY to the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, which were shed abroad upon the First Christians. But whoever considers attentively the Subject He was even then upon, and the Connexion of these Words with the Verses immediately foregoing — *Above all things have fervent CHARITY among yourselves : — Use HOSPITALITY one to another without grudging. As every Man hath RECEIVED the Gift, even so MINISTER the same, &c.* — will, I believe, be of another Opinion, and will take them as a General Direction ; having Relation both to what goes before and what follows.

That

That all the Advantages of *Nature*,  
*Education*, and *Fortune*, which we en-  
 joy, are the *Gift of God*.

That we are not to look upon our-  
 selves as *Proprietors* of the Gifts of  
 God, but as *Stewards* of them; and,  
 as *Stewards*, must expect to give ac-  
 count how we have employed them;  
 and that the way to employ them ar-  
 right, and according to the *Will* of  
 Him that gave them, is to *Minister*  
*the same one to another*.

I. I shall begin with the First of these  
 Particulars, *The Grace of God is Mani-  
 fold*: His Favours to the *Sons of Men*  
 are Various, Dispensed according to the  
*Counsel of His Will*, in Different *Kinds*,  
 and in Different *Degrees*. And hence it  
 is, that to live in *SOCIETY* is not only  
*good and profitable*, but *Necessary* to Men:  
 since No Man is *Sufficient to Himself*, or  
 can in *Himself* supply and satisfy his  
 Wants and Desires; and, on the other  
 hand, *EVERY* Man is endued with some-  
 thing



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thing which may render him Useful in some Degree, or Acceptable to his Neighbours : — \* So that the Eye cannot say unto the Hand, I have no Need of Thee : nor, again, the Head to the Feet, I have no Need of You. — If the whole Body, as St. Paul observes, † were an Eye, where were the Hearing ? If the whole were Hearing, where were the Smelling ? God has, in the Course of his Providence, given unto some Men Excellent natural Abilities, and Great Wisdom — to Others many Opportunities of improving themselves — to Others Power and Honour — to Others Riches — and to Others again all these Advantages together ; but each perhaps in a Lesser Degree. And thus it comes to pass, that ‡ those Members of the Body, which seem to be more feeble are necessary. And those Members, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant Honour, and our Uncomely parts have more abundant Comeliness. For our Comely parts have

1 Cor. xii. 21. † ver. 17. ‡ Cor. xii. 22. —

no Need : but God hath Tempered the Body together, having given more Abundant Honour to that part which Lacked : That there should be no Schism in the Body, but that the Members should have the same Care one for another. — Whereas if all the Advantages above-mentioned were given in the Highest Degree to the same Persons ; This in all probability would end in nothing but Tyranny and Oppression, and the Misery of the rest of Mankind : And on the other hand, If they were given to all Men in the Same Degree ; The Consequence of so exact Equality perhaps might be no less than the Ruin and Destruction of them All. There are therefore *Diversities of Gifts, and Differences of Administrations. The Grace of God is Manifold.*

II. Secondly, Another Thing we should do well to consider is, That all the Advantages we enjoy, by Nature, or Fortune, or Education, are the Gift of GOD. This though I think No man can really doubt of ; Most men act, as if they were fully Persuaded of the Con-

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*trary — and as if they said in their*  
*\* Hearts, My Power and the Might of my*  
*Hand have gotten me all these Blessings.*  
*Thus it is, when Men have † eaten and*  
*are Full, and have built Goodly Houses,*  
*and dwelt therein ; When their Herds and*  
*their Flocks Multiply, and their Silver and*  
*their Gold is multiplied, and all that they*  
*have is multiplied : Then their Heart is*  
*Lifted up, and they Forget the Lord their*  
*God, who has done so Great Things for*  
*them — They forget the Lord their*  
*God ; and behave themselves unseemly to-*  
*wards their Brethren, as if there were a*  
*Marvellous Difference between them,*  
*and they had not all one Parent —*  
*Whereas, in Truth, if the Matter were*  
*strictly enquired into, The Difference*  
*between them would be found to lie per-*  
*haps, not so much in Themselves, as in*  
*their Fields and Vineyards — Or if there*  
*should be found a Difference in Nature,*  
*The Question of St. Paul (1 Cor. iv. 7.)*  
*ought yet to be a little attended to — Who*  
*Maketh thee to Differ from another ? And*

*\* Deut. viii. 17.*

*† ver. 12. —*

*What*



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What *hast thou*, which *Thou didst not receive*? Now if *thou didst receive it*, *Why dost thou Glory*, as if *thou hadst not received it* — Thou wast born of Rich, and Honourable Parents : hast Lands in Possession — *not through thine own Arm*, but the Wisdom or Industry of thy Forefathers — \* *Houses full of all good Things*, which *Thou filledst not* ; *Wells digged which thou diggedst not* ; *Vineyards and Olive Trees*, which *Thou plantedst not* — Despisest thou therefore those who have *not* these Blessings? Thou hast attained perhaps to a Higher Degree of *Learning and Knowledge* than thy Neighbours — Enquire diligently of thy self, Whether this is owing so much to any Excellency of *thine own*, as to some Advantages of *Leisure and Education*, which *they Wanted* : — Or put the case, that thou art blessed by Nature with a better *Constitution*, a Happier *Invention*, a Stronger *Memory*, a Clearer *Jndgment*, than some others — Give *Glory to God*, who has enabled thee to arrive at *Greater*

\* *Deut. vi, 11.*

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Excellencies than others, with *Less De-*  
grees of Labour and Industry.

III. But Thirdly, If We will *bear*  
*our Apostle*, We are not to consider our-  
selves as *Proprietors* of the Gifts of God ;  
or to imagine them in *such Sense* OUR  
OWN, that we have Absolute Right to do  
with them What *we please*, or to em-  
ploy them to *any Purposes*, that may  
best suit Our *Humour* or *Fancy* : But  
must remember, We are, in Truth, no  
more than *Stewards* of the Gifts we have  
received ; and *as Stewards* shall be one  
Day called upon to give *Account* to HIM,  
who Gave them. Which if we would  
do *with Joy*, and *not with Grief*, we  
must employ them to those Good Pur-  
poses, for which they were given.

WHAT those are, is *clearly* enough  
declared to us by the *Apostle* in my Text,  
*As every Man*, says He, *hath* received  
*the Gift*, *even so Minister the same* one to  
another, *as Good Stewards of the mani-*  
*fold Grace of God.*

If we would be *Good Stewards* of  
the Gifts we have received, We must  
*Minister*

*Minister them one to another* : that is, We must take especial Care that they become, in Fact, What they were designed ; the *Use* and *Benefit*, not the *Ruin* of Society.

Where a Power is lodged of doing Great Good, there will be likewise a Power of doing Harm — It is very difficult, if not Impossible, to *Separate* them : And therefore it must lie upon the *Steward* himself to consider, *Which Part* it may be proper for him to *chuse*. And sure, a very Small Degree of Thought and Attention will shew him *clearly*, that he must expect a *Punishment* for his Misbehaviour, *proportionable* to the *Abilities* which he has *abused*.

Our *Misbehaviour* indeed in this Regard may be of *two* Kinds. We may *neglect* entirely the Powers and Opportunities which are put into our hands ; or we may make them Serve Purposes directly *Contrary* to those, for which they were given. The *Slothful and Unprofitable Servant* in the Parable, who \* *hid his LORD's Money*, neglecting to

\* Matt. xxv. 18, 24, --- 30.



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*put it to the Exchangers, was therefore cast into Outer Darknes, where shall be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth. And if Neglect and Sloth and Indolence deserved this Sentence — Of how much Sorer Punishment, suppose Ye, shall They be thought Worthby, who have been Diligent and Active — in Mischief; and have made use of their Parts, or Learning, or Knowledge, or Power, or Riches, to Crush — not to Raise their Fellow-Creatures?*

*For Such we have too much Reason to fear, The Furnace will be heated seven times Hotter.*

*FAR otherwise was the Behaviour of Those, whose MEMORY we are now met together to pay a Decent Respect to, and Which, we trust, shall not be afraid of any Evil Report.*

*I shall apply the Particulars above-mentioned, First to Them, and Secondly to Ourselves.*

*1. And First, In the Dispensation of the Manifold Grace of God, They seem to have been blessed with a more than Common Share; not only with the Gifts of Fortune, but with Prudence likewise—*

to Discern how they might best Promote the General Good; and with a *faithful Heart*—to neglect no Means of Directing them accordingly. They wisely saw, that, for Want of a *Moderate* Portion of What was to *Them* given with so *Large* a Hand, a Thousand noble Minds had lain *Uncultivated*; many *Great Parts* and *Excellent natural Endowments* in a Manner *Lost to the World*, because they had never Opportunity to shew themselves: and therefore thought, they could not better serve Mankind, than by making the *Superfluities* of their *own* Gifts Call forth the Gifts of *Others*.

2. *Secondly*, The FOUNDERS and ENCOURAGERS of *These Societies* seem to have had Less than usual of that Weakness abovementioned, which a Great Abundance in the good things of this World is apt to make Men fall into—to *forget* that they are the *Gift of God*—to *Glory*, as if they had not *Received* them—and to *Despise*, and *Behave themselves unseemly* towards those, who have them *not*:—Which perhaps may be *one* Cause, that when Men begin to find, they must  
shortly

shortly go the Way of all the Earth, and can no longer have Dominion over their Fellow-Creatures. They are Desirous of being Represented in their Children or Relations; and sometimes, that the Representation may be the more Perfect, leave the Whole of their Substance to some One of them.

3. And this will naturally lead us to consider our FOUNDERS and BENEFACTORS in a Third Respect — as they were Stewards of the Grace of God.

And GOOD Stewards we may sincerely say they were of it. The Gifts which they had received from Heaven they considered as received: nor did they suppose them given, that they might please themselves, Regardless of the Will, and Honour, of the Giver. And therefore wou'd not confine them within the Narrow Bounds of their own Family: but Ministred them to OTHERS; and so ministred, that all Ranks, and Orders, and Degrees of Men have been Benefited thereby, and shall be, from Generation to Generation.

Whether



Whether therefore we consider the Advantages, which *Ourselves*, the more *Immediate* Objects of their Bounty, have received, — or the Great Benefits which are from hence derived throughout the *Land*, — or the Wise Provision they have made to *Perpetuate* the Blessing; Their Conduct will appear in *Every* Light — both in point of *Integrity*, and *Prudence* — Worthy of all Praise and Honour: Nor can *any* thing sully the Brightness of it, but *our* Behaving contrary to the *End* of our *Institution*; either not Employing at all the Advantages and Opportunities which have been put into our Hands; or Contriving to make them serve more our own *Interest* and *Ambition*, than the Good of the World.

IF SUCH should be *our* Conduct, It would cast a Shade on *Theirs*; and the Weaker part of Mankind might be brought *really to Believe* what the more designing Pretend, that these Societies are not of so much Service to the Publick, as has been generally thought; and that therefore the Wisdom of Those, who first Established them, and of all,

C

who

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who have since shewn a Disposition to Encourage them, may justly be called in Question — *How* justly I shall not at present dispute: nor will I ask, whether the *Abuse* of an Institution argues the Weakness and Folly of the *Institution itself* — or whether a *Warping now and then* in a few Instances from the Original Design, shews that the Design is not upon the *Whole* Good and Useful — or whether the Nation would have been more Advantaged, if all that now supports *Our Two Great Seats of Learning* had been given by those, who have thought fit to encourage them, to their *Children, or Relations, or Friends,* — to be Disposed of by *Them* in the same Manner *from one Generation to another.*

Be all this as it will — If we have any Regard to Their MEMORY, We shall be willing to cut off all *Occasion* of Reproach. Which, I believe, may be done *effectually*, if we will *follow* Their Steps; and give *Earnest Heed* to the Direction of the Apostle in my Text, *lest at any time we should let it slip.*

Give me Leave therefore to apply what has been said a little to *Ourselves.*

And

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And indeed *We* seem to be particularly Concerned in it. *We* have had frequent Opportunities of seeing that the *Grace of God* is *Manifold*: Various are the *Dispositions, Tempers, Capacities*, which are here to be Cultivated, and Improved. And it is the very *End* and *Design* of our *Institution*, to make each particular *Gift* serve to the *Perfection* and *Happiness* of Him that possesses it, and to the General Good of *all*.

And while we consider the great Advantages we have enjoyed, and still enjoy, by means of our *Education* Here; and the Opportunities which have been thereby put into our Hands of Benefiting *Others*, and making *Them* a Blessing to the World; We cannot avoid looking upon ourselves as *Stewards of the Grace of God*, and *Stewards of a Considerable* part of it. And while we view ourselves in *this* Light, we shall neither *Envy* nor *Despise* the Different *Gifts* and *Talents* of each other; but shall endeavour to Improve each his *own*, and unite in proper Methods to make the *Whole* useful in the Largest Extent.



And if we consider as we ought the *Influence*, which Our *good*, or *ill* Behaviour, will have upon the World; We shall desire nothing so much, as to be *found Faithful*——Knowing well, that if this be *required in EVERY Steward\**, much more in those, whose *Negligence*, or *Misemployment* of their Talents will be attended with the most Fatal Consequences.

The *Labouring Man*, and *Mean Mechanick*, Who get their Bread by the *Sweat of the Brow*, and are continually busied in making a tolerable Provision for themselves, and Families, may be well *excused* perhaps, if they should spend a considerable part of the small time they are freed from their Ordinary Toil, in *Rest*, or *Innocent Diversion*; and should be *ignorant of*, or look but *superficially* into, Many things, which Men, who are in a Different Way of Life, may be obliged to consider carefully——The *Gentleman* and *Man of Fortune*, for whom a Happy and a Large Provision has been made, by the *Labours* or *Wisdom* of their Forefathers——Whose *Time*, as Them-

\* 1 Cor. iv. 2.

selves are apt to Complain, does often *lye upon their Hands*——would indeed be Inexcusable, if they should not employ *some* part of it in Enquiring into the *Will* of their CREATOR, by Whom they are suffered to *enjoy the Fruits* of others Industry; Which, if they think at all, they will allow, They should employ to *HIS Honour*, and the *Benefit* of their *Fellow Creatures*. Should they, instead of this, be continually searching for New Diversions, and New Pleasures; Regardless whether Good or Evil——Should *They* abuse the *Talents* which are intrusted with them——What Mitigation the Punishment of *some* of them may receive, from their having had a *faulty Education*, from their having been brought up in *Ignorance* and *Luxurious Living*, and not enough provided to Encounter the Temptations, which might be afterwards *let loose* upon them——*This* must be left to the *God of Mercies*; nor will it become *us* to determine positively of it.—But for *Ourselves* — *We* cannot make use of any such *Plea*. Our Minds were *early* formed to Study and Enquiry; to Care, and Great Exactness  
in

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in our Enquiries : It is the very *Business* of Our *Lives*, to Encrease in Learning, and Knowledge, and All Wisdom. And *Every Science*, which is here Cultivated, every *Branch of Learning* does, by nearer or more remote Consequence, tend to the *Glory of God*, and the *Good of Men*. And for our *Improvement* in them, the Piety of Our FOUNDERS and BENEFACTORS has made fair Provision.

Should we neglect Advantages and Opportunities, with so Good Design afforded us — Should we neglect to *build* upon the Foundation, which has here been laid — Should *We*, who are set as *Lights in the World be Darkness*, *How Great were that Darkness?* Or should we make use of the Knowledge we have gained to any other Purpose, than the *Publick Benefit* ; than to make Men Wiser and Better ; and to Confirm the Practice of every Grace and Virtue — Should we not give too just *Occasion to them which desire Occasion* — The Mischief hence arising would spread far, and wide, and Every Corner of the Land would feel the ill Effects of it.

Let



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Let us therefore Consider seriously the *Importance* of the *Talents*, which are Committed to us ; and Remember how much it Depends on *Us*, whether True Knowledge, Religion, and Virtue shall *Keep the Footing* they have at present in the World ; or *Ignorance*, *Infidelity*, and the *Overflowings of Ungodliness* Prevail.

If these Considerations be allowed, now and then, a Place in our Thoughts, We shall not fail of *Approving* Ourselves *Good Stewards of the Grace of God* ; shall answer, in a Good Degree, the *Excellent End* of our *Institution* ; make a *Proper Return* for the Blessings we enjoy ; and be one Day Partakers, with the *Authors* of them, of that *Happiness* and *Glory*, which will be the Portion of Those, who \* *Turn many to Righteousness*.

\* Dan. xii. 3.

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*Then followed the* COMMEMORATION *of the*  
FOUNDERS *and* BENEFACTORS.

F I N I S.

Let us therefore consider fully the  
importance of this subject, which are  
committed to us; and remember how  
much it depends on us, whether Time  
Knowledge, Religion, and Virtue shall  
have the victory, and have no dominion in  
the World; or Ignorance, Avarice, and  
the Conquests of Unbelief shall.

If the Conquests be allowed  
now and then a Place in our Thoughts  
We shall not be so easily overcome  
Our Thoughts of the Grave, and the  
after in a Good Degree, the more  
the End of our Existence; make a Pro-  
per Reason for the Things we enjoy;  
and to our Last Thoughts, with the Re-  
flection of that which is to come, and  
Glad, which will be the Portion of  
those who have many a Day.

1782

Now I have the Command of my  
Pen, I will write a few Lines.

1782